

Mosquito Control Effectiveness and Surveillance Program

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For a long time, many Americans did not see mosquito-borne disease as a major domestic threat; however, the rapid spread of West Nile Virus has changed this. Recent events surrounding the spread of West Nile have highlighted the need for strengthening both national and local capacity to respond to new and emerging mosquito-borne viral diseases. Addressing West Nile and other emerging infectious disease problems requires effective monitoring for, as well as further development of, prevention and control measures.

The Mosquito Control Effectiveness and Surveillance Program (part of a recent EPA New England enforcement settlement in a pesticide case entitled *In the Matter of American Biophysics*, Docket No. FIFRA-01-2003-0008) is intended to aid efforts by the State of Rhode Island and local mosquito control authorities to control mosquitoes that breed in numerous above-ground storm water retention and detention ponds that minimize runoff from man-made structures or surfaces. The program also is intended to enhance existing arbovirus surveillance efforts by state authorities regarding the presence and identification of West Nile, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and other mosquito-borne diseases. The Control and Surveillance Program is intended to provide public health-related data regarding mosquitoes and vector-borne disease characteristics associated with storm water retention/detention ponds, data concerning pond characteristics most likely to support a mosquito breeding habitat, and data relating to possible alternatives to chemical or biological methods for reducing mosquito populations.

Implementation of this science-based program is expected to occur throughout the 2004 mosquito breeding season and will be accomplished in close coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Office of Mosquito Abatement Coordination. The program will also benefit by regular input from expert entomologists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Such experts have voluntarily agreed to provide technical assistance during the development, implementation, and completion of the Control and Surveillance Program. Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, EPA, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has identified the mosquito as a pest "of significant public health importance."